

The Loyal Nonconformist;

O R,

An Account what he dare swear, and vvhhat not.

I Fear an Oath, before I swear to take it;
And well I may, for 'tis the *Oath of God*:
I fear an Oath, when I have sworn, to break it;
And well I may, for Vengeance hath a Rod.

And yet I may swear, and must too, 'tis due
Both to my Heav'nly, and my Earthly King:
If I assent, it must be full and true;
And if I promise, I must do the thing.

I am no *Quaker*, not at all to swear;
Nor *Papist*, to swear East, and mean the West;
But am a *Protestant*, and shall declare
What I cannot, and what I can protest.

I never will endeavour Alteration
Of Monarchy, or of that Royal Name,
Which God hath chosen to command this Nation,
But will maintain his Person, Crown & Fame:

What he commands, if *Conscience* say not nay,
(For *Conscience* is a greater King than he)
For *Conscience-sake*, not *Fear*, I will obey;
And if not *Active*, *Passive* I will be.

I'll pray that all his Subjects may agree,
And never more be crumbled into parts;
I will endeavour that his Majestie
May not be King of *Clubs*, but King of *Hearts*.

The *Royal Oar* I swear I will defend;
But *Ivy* which doth hug it so,
I swear that is a Thief, and not a Friend,
And about Steeples fitter for to grow.

The Civil-Government I will obey;
But for Church-Policy I swear I doubt it;
And if my Bible want th' *Apocrypha*,
I'll swear my Book may be compleat without it.

I dare not swear Church-Government is right
As it should be; but this I dare to swear,
If they should put me to't, the Bishops might
Do better, and be better than they are.

Nor will I swear for all that they are worth,
That Bishopricks will stand, & Doomsday see;
And yet I'll swear the Gospel holdeth forth
Christ with his Ministers till then will be.

That *Peter* was a Prelate they aver,
But I'll not swear't when all is said and done
But I dare swear, and hope I shall not err,
He preach'd a hundred Sermons to their one.

Peter a Fisher was, and he caught Men:
And they have Nets, & in them catch Men too;
Yet I'll not swear they are alike, for them
He caught he sav'd: these catch, & them undo.

I dare not swear that Courts Ecclesiastick
Do in their Laws make just and gentle Votes;
But I'll be sworn that *Burton*, *Pryn* and *Bastwick*
Were once *Ear-witnesses* of harsher Notes.

Archdeacons, Deans & Chapters are brave men,
By Canon, not by Scripture: but to this,
If I be call'd, I'll swear, and swear agen,
That no such Chapter in my Bible is.

I'll not condemn those *Presbyterians*, who
Refused Bishopricks, and might have had 'em:
But *Mistress Calamy* I'll swear doth do
As well as if she were a *Spiritual Madam*.

For Holy Vestments I'll not take an Oath
Which Linen most Canonical may be;
Some are for *Lawn*, some *Holland*, some *Scotscloth*;
And *Hemp* for some is fitter than all three.

Paul had a Cloak, and Books, & Parchments too;
But that he wore a *Surplice* I'll not swear,
Nor that his Parchments did his Orders shew,
Or in his Books there was a *Common-Prayer*.

I owe assistance to the King by Oath;
And if he please to put the Bishops down,
As who knows what may be, I should be loth
To see *Tom Becket's* Mitre push the Crown.

And yet Church-Government I do allow,
And am contented Bishops be the men;
And that I speak in earnest, here I vow
Where we have one, I wish we might have ten.

In fine, the Civil Power I'll obey,
And seek the Peace & Welfare of the Nation:
If this won't do, I know not what to say,
But farewell *London*, farewell *Corporation*.

R. W.